

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to entry of this Amendment, the application included claims 1-8 and 13-20. Claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 18 have been amended, and claim 16 has been canceled. No claims have been added. Hence, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1-8, 13-15 and 17-20 stand pending for examination.

Claims 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the cited portions of U.S. Patent No. 6,219,994 to Taniguchi (“Taniguchi”) in view of the cited portions of U.S. Patent No. 6,801,833 to Pintsov et al. (“Pintsov”).

Claims 13, 14 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pintsov in view of Taniguchi.

Claims 15 and 16 stand objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claim 18 has been amended to address the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection. No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

All independent claims have been amended to include subject matter indicated by the Office Action to be allowable. Hence, all pending claims are believed to be allowable. The remaining claims depend from one of the independent claims and are believed to be allowable, at least for the same reason.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 303-571-4000.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Irvin E. Branch/

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